



**146th Airlift Wing
Office of Public Affairs
California Air National Guard
Channel Islands ANG, California**

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For Immediate Release

Local Air Guard unit fights Simi Fire

CHANNEL ISLANDS AIR NATIONAL GUARD STATION, Calif. — The California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing today began aerial fire-fighting operations against Southern California's Simi Fire, operating from this base 60 miles northwest of Los Angeles.

By 2 p.m. two C-130E Hercules cargo planes equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, or MAFFS, had flown five sorties and dropped nearly 15,000 gallons of retardant against the fire.

MAFFS is a self-contained, 3,000-gallon aerial fluid dispersal system that enables the C-130 to be converted to the fire-fighting airtanker role without requiring structural modifications to the aircraft.

The airlift wing was activated by the state for fire-fighting late Saturday, but wind conditions prevented air operations until this morning.

The fire-fighting team at Channel Islands consisted of approximately 50 people—Air National Guard aircrews and ground personnel, and personnel from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

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“We’re facing some of the most severe conditions we could face on the ground,” said John Winder, CDF Battalion Chief. “This is the tail end of the fire season and fuel is as dry as it can be.”

Lt. Col. Clyde Doheny, a 146th Airlift Wing pilot, said attacking the Simi Fire required flying through a corridor between the smoke plumes of the Piru and Simi Fires, turning south above the Santa Clarita Valley to make the retardant drop against the fire’s eastern flank and then retracing the path back through the corridor.

Personnel and aircraft from the Air Force Reserve’s 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., are expected to arrive Tuesday to join in the efforts against fires in Southern California.

The airlift wings are two of four Air Force units, all Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve, that fly the fire-fighting mission.

For more information contact 2nd Lt. Julio J. Bermejo, Public Affairs Officer, at (805) 986-7496 or (805) 479-1050.

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